

2015 Severe Weather Fact Sheet

National Weather Service Lincoln, IL

Severe Weather Preparedness Week: March 1 – 7, 2015

- **A statewide Tornado Drill will be conducted at 10:00 am Tuesday March 3rd**
 - All NWS offices in IL will issue an actual Tornado Warning as a test for all 102 counties in the state
 - The test warning will clearly state that NO SEVERE WEATHER is occurring, and that we are doing this for test purposes
 - We don't do this to scare people, but we do this to adequately test the Emergency Alert System (EAS) that radio and TV broadcasters use to warn the public of hazardous weather. This is also done to verify that people using weather alert radios can receive an actual tornado warning.
 - This has been done for more than 25 years – every first Tuesday in March at 10 am.
 - Use of an actual Tornado Warning for this test has been approved by NWS Headquarters, the Federal Communications Commission and the Illinois Broadcasters Association

- **The main themes for this year's Severe Weather Prep Week are:**
 - **In Illinois, nearly 80% of all tornadoes occur from April 1st through June 30th, during the late afternoon and early evening hours. However in the past 3 years, half of all Illinois tornadoes (67 out of a total of 133) occurred in the fall or winter (September through February).**

 - **It is VERY important for people to be prepared for severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash flooding all year in the state of Illinois.**
 - Have a designated place to take shelter in your home, business, school and anywhere people gather.
 - Going to the basement under a sturdy piece of furniture or the stairwell is best. Otherwise, go to the lowest level in small area, like a closet, interior hallway or bathroom without windows.
 - Have an Emergency Supply Kit with extra clothing, money, water, non-perishable foods, medications, tools and flashlights.

- **Do NOT just rely on outdoor warning sirens to alert you that a severe storm or tornado is approaching.** Have multiple ways to receive information such as:
 - Weather Alert Radio
 - Portable radio with battery backup
 - Wireless Emergency Alerts on most smart phones
 - Cell phone apps that will send you warnings for your area
 - Local TV and radio stations

Severe Weather Impacts

- The **United States experiences more tornadoes than any other country** in the world! An average of 1,300 tornadoes impact the U.S. every year.
- **Illinois averages about 47 tornadoes** each year. Last year, 48 tornadoes were reported in Illinois resulting in 2 injuries and more than \$5 Million damage.
- Tornadoes in Illinois have killed 220 people, and injured 4,445 since 1950.
- The biggest tornado outbreak in Illinois since 1950 occurred on **April 19, 1996**. A total of 41 tornadoes were reported on that day, including four F3 tornadoes. One person was killed, 70 people were injured, and property damage exceeded \$100 Million.
- High wind from **downbursts and straight-line winds** cause **more damage than nearly 75% of the tornadoes** that occur in Illinois! Illinois averages around 500 reports of thunderstorm related wind damage each year.
- A total of **20 people have died from damaging winds in Illinois the past 15 years**. Since 2000 there have been more than 100 people injured in Illinois from severe thunderstorm related wind.

Central / Southeast Illinois Severe Weather Statistics

- Of the top 15 counties with the most tornadoes in the state, **9 are in central or eastern Illinois**. These are:

Logan (ranked #2), **Sangamon** (#3), **McLean** (#4), **Tazewell** (#5), **Woodford** (#6), **Macon** (#11), **Champaign** (#12), **Douglas** (#14) and **Piatt** (#15). *[Data based on tornadoes per 100 square miles from 1950-2014]*

- Since 2008, 75% of all severe weather events (damaging winds, tornadoes and large hail) in central and southeast Illinois had advance warning by the NWS in Lincoln, with an average lead time of 17 minutes.
- Based on severe weather reports the past 10 years, the calendar date with the **highest probability of severe weather** in central and eastern Illinois is **June 20th**. This is followed by June 1st, May 28th – 31st, June 22nd and June 25th.

Other Impacts of Severe Weather Warnings

- NWS Implementation of storm based warnings for smaller areas, and portions of counties, resulted in a **79% reduction of false alarms across central and eastern Illinois since 2008**.
- **In 2015**, NWS offices in the Midwest (including the Lincoln, IL office) will continue to put **enhanced wording in all Tornado Warnings**. This is intended to improve communications of the anticipated threats and impacts of tornadoes. Specific information in the warning will highlight the tornadoes that are expected to produce, or confirm the occurrence of, considerable or catastrophic damage.

Severe Weather Preparedness

- The National Weather Service's goal is to build a **“Weather Ready Nation”**. The purpose of this initiative is to save lives as well as livelihoods. By increasing the nation's weather readiness the country will be better prepared to protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from weather-related disasters.
- The National Weather Service urges people to become a **“Force of Nature”**. Being a “Force of Nature” goes beyond taking appropriate preparedness action. It is about inspiring others to do the same. One way to do this is through social media. Use Facebook, Twitter, other social media sites, and texting to share preparedness information and NWS hazardous weather alerts with your friends and family.

Visit our website at: www.weather.gov/Lincoln for the latest weather and river forecasts, warnings, current conditions, radar & satellite imagery, and climate information.